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3rd Annual Symposium on Small Towns: Opportunities and celebration for the future of small towns

Summary:

(April 29, 2005)-Wondering what our small towns will be like 10, 20, or even 50 years from now? The Third Annual Symposium on Small Towns will be looking forward into the future of our small towns and rural areas. This two-day event is scheduled for June 7 and 8, and will be held at the University of Minnesota, Morris. Those attending the Symposium will learn about and discuss global trends, how rural communities are shaping them to meet future challenges, and to understand how our political framework and issues can be changed to better support small towns. Community projects will be showcased, participants will actively engage in visioning sessions, and small towns and rural living will be celebrated.

Using Your Imagination!

Visioning sessions will engage participants in using their imagination to examine various elements of small town life. An Appreciative Inquiry Method will allow diverse participants to look forward in a creative and respectful atmosphere. Sessions include agriculture, economics, landscapes/design, education, and media to mention a few.

What is the Role of Public Policy?

Learn more about trends impacting the legislature, political action, and issues that will affect small towns and rural areas. Legislative leaders will share and debate future thinking and positions on the legislative process and issues.

Does your Community Share a Common Vision?

Individuals and community groups are invited to bring collaborative projects that focus on new and creative approaches in preparing for the future. If you or your community group has a community project that could be shared please contact Katherine Fenrich, Associate Director of the Minnesota Association of Small Cities phone: (320)-693-1283 or email at maosc@mchsi.com.

Celebrate Rural Life

An evening of outstanding music, poetry, storytelling, and much more will be provided by performers from across the state. Organized tours of various sites in Morris will also be available including a newly erected wind turbine and the West Central Horticulture Gardens. Experience the blooming June prairie with a quiet walk or an auto tour.

Come as a Group!

The Symposium is open to the public individuals and teams are encouraged to attend the event to network with people and locate resources as you work to strengthen and shape the future of your small town. The registration fee of \$60.00 is kept to a minimum to encourage participation. MPR members receive a 10 % discount. For more information and registration go to the Center for Small Towns web page at www.centerforsmalltowns.org, click on the Symposium link, or call at 320-589-6451.

The Center for Small Towns, Minnesota Public Radio, the Minnesota Association of Small Cities, and the University of

Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships are co-sponsoring the Third Annual Symposium on Small Towns.

This symposium is a part of the President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conferences Series of the University of Minnesota. In recognition of the University of Minnesota's recent completion of its 150th year of service to the State and the people of Minnesota, a new University-community conference series is being developed to celebrate the research, historical contributions, and the impact of the University on society. These working conferences are intended to stimulate future interdisciplinary academic investments through the compact planning process and encourage applications of research to important areas of economic development, community development, and public policy.

[Contributed by Jessica Beyer '02, community program assistant at the Center for Small Towns]

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.